

UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
Office of the Executive Director
Interagency Advisory Group
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Washington, D.C. 20415

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Minutes of the Committee on
STAFFING

March 3, 1978

Mr. John Fossum, Chairman of the IAG Committee on Staffing, announced that the meeting would be devoted to a discussion of changes and an expansion of cooperative education programs. Thirty representatives from 25 departments and agencies were in attendance.

Mr. Fossum introduced Chairman Campbell who, after acknowledging the presence of agency officials, strongly emphasized his personal support and that of the other two Commissioners for programs which would involve students in the affairs of Government. He also pointed out that President Carter, at the time of signing the Executive order authorizing the Presidential Management Intern Program, remarked that his Administration is depending upon Federal managers to utilize the internship and other approved career-related work-study programs to attract college and university trained talent to the career service.

The Presidential Management Intern Program, the Chairman announced, is on schedule and that the 250 finalists were to be selected during the month of March for placement in Federal agencies in the near future. He hastened to add that, although this program is on schedule, his participation during the Staffing Committee meeting was to support and encourage agencies to support the expansion of cooperative education programs to include graduate and associate degree students in selected occupations.

Letters were sent to presidents of colleges with graduate schools informing them of the expansion of the program to include graduate students. Responses to the Chairman's letter are well in excess of 200 from schools which are very enthusiastic and eager to establish agreements with agencies. The Chairman expressed the hopes that agencies would be equally responsive and that they would give serious consideration to utilizing this additional resource to recruit college trained personnel. It was also announced at this time that the Commission had approved a similar expansion to include associate degree students in those occupations which offer the greatest opportunities for entry into the career service following graduation. Instructions regarding associate degree programs are published in FPM Letter 308-10, copies of which were distributed during the meeting.



Following the Chairman's review of program objectives, several questions were specifically directed to him. The representative from the Department of Defense pointed out that, with the proliferation of student programs, DOD is finding it very difficult to continue to support such programs without some ceiling relief. He then asked the question as to whether or not the Commission might seek Administration approval of ceiling exemptions to support cooperative education programs. There were other agency representatives who were in general agreement with DOD's comments and question. Before the Chairman responded, another side of this issue was discussed; that is, that if ceiling relief was provided to support students only without an equal number of manpower spaces to accommodate conversion, there would be a real danger of agencies oversubscribing under student employment and not being able to convert. This, in the opinion of the person presenting this discussion, could result in adverse public relations among schools and students who were contemplating entering the career service. After some additional discussion, Chairman Campbell indicated that the Commission staff would review the issues and, based upon the facts developed, it may be possible and appropriate to seek ceiling relief.

The Department of Defense's testing requirement of cooperative education students prior to conversion which was imposed by a congressional joint conference committee during Defense's appropriations hearings was also surfaced in terms of that edict's applicability to expansion of cooperative education programs. The Chairman indicated that this problem is a very complicated one, one which he, the other two Commissioners, along with DOD officials, had addressed themselves personally and in correspondence without favorable results. The question was then raised by the DOD representative as to whether or not the Administration, with support of White House staff, might intervene with the Congress to seek relief. Chairman Campbell then advised after some additional discussion that he would take this issue up with Assistant Secretary White of DOD.

The Veterans Administration's representative expressed concerns regarding the 20 percent limitation on noncompetitive conversion for graduate students completing cooperative education. This central issue here was whether this limitation was agencywide to which the response was in the affirmative.

It was also recognized that the Commission's instructions are relatively new and, when agencies begin to establish agreements with schools, there would be other issues which would appear to be contrary to the instructions, such as the establishment of programs in fields of study other than accounting, engineering, the physical and life sciences, and the general fields of management and administration. Agencies were reminded that where there appears to be a need for an exception, they should, with justification, call this to the attention of the Director, Bureau of Recruiting and Examining, and the Commission would to the extent possible approve the exception.

Following this discussion, the Chairman again expressed his appreciation to agency representatives for coming out to the meeting, particularly in light of the weather and again strongly encouraged agencies to utilize, to the fullest extent possible, cooperative education in the development of recruitment resources.

The meeting was then devoted to a discussion of the instructions published in FPM Letter 308-9 related to cooperative education programs for graduate students. Mr. Poole identified several of the issues which had been called to his attention and for which clarification was being sought. Perhaps the one which needs the greatest clarification relates to the initial fields of study for which programs are approved. Section 3-4a of the FPM Letter identifies engineering, accounting, the physical and life sciences, and the general fields of management and administration for which completion of the requirements for the master's degree would be qualifying for entry-level positions at the GS-9 level. The latter two occupational groups, management and administration, have been the subject of this concern primarily because agencies were unable to specifically identify the occupational groups. It was pointed out that the general fields of management and administration should be interpreted to include the following:

- *GS-160 Equal Opportunity Specialist
- *GS-200 Personnel Management Group
- GS-300 General Administrative Group
- GS-1100 Business and Industry Group
- GS-2000 Supply Group

*A master's degree is qualifying at GS-9 in these occupations only for those specific positions involving program planning, research or similar functions for which the theoretical knowledges obtained through graduate study are more important than line operating experience in the occupation. Graduate co-op appointments may be made to jobs in these series only if they meet the criteria specified in Handbook X-118 for graduate education substitution.

Mr. Poole indicated that most of the schools which have contacted him had no difficulty with the requirement that they either give course credit or institute a work-study component to satisfy their degree requirements.

Following the discussion of the issues identified, agencies actively participated in discussions related to expanding the program to include graduate students. They also demonstrated that they are quite knowledgeable and that the instructions did not present too many problems. They were advised, however, that if further clarification is needed, requests for such information should be directed to the Office of Youth Employment Programs, Staffing Resources Division.

Miss Barbara Phinney provided some background information regarding student enrollment in 2-year, community, junior, and technical colleges, following which there was a discussion of the new instructions published in FPM Letter 308-10 regarding associate degree cooperative education programs. These instructions authorize noncompetitive conversion for students completing cooperative education programs in 10 occupational groups. These occupations represent those recommended by agencies and for which there are predictable staffing needs in the foreseeable future. It was pointed out that, although the Commission would entertain recommendations for additional occupational areas, agencies were asked to withhold such recommendations for at least a 6-month period.

Under associate degree programs for which noncompetitive conversion authority has not been approved, agencies should continue to appoint students under section 213.3102(q) of Schedule A, and students will be expected to qualify through competitive procedures following graduation. High school cooperative education programs were also discussed and agencies were advised that instructions regarding these programs are also attached to FPM Letter 308-10. Instructions for both the associate degree and high school programs will be incorporated in chapter 308 of the Federal Personnel Manual.

During the discussion period which followed Miss Phinney's comments, questions were raised regarding conversion authority for high school cooperative education students. Agencies were advised that programs at the secondary level present some major issues yet to be resolved, issues related to rates of pay, standards under which students would be selected in the blue collar occupations, and the specific positions to which they would be assigned. These and other issues are currently under review here in the Commission.

ATTENDANCE

Alan K. Campbell (Chairman of the CSC)	Taylor, Alan (NEH)
Fossum, John (IAG Chairman) (CSC)	Turney, Hal (DLA)
Benadom, Brenda (NSF)	Watkins, Ruth (VA)
Boyles, Hal (Navy)	Webster, Deborah (DOE)
Brown, Jerry (NASA)	Weiner, Nancy (GAO)
Edgmon, Lester (VA)	White, Robert (DOD)
Hicks, Ed (HEW)	Workman, Robert (OASD)
Hobek, Catherine (NSF)	
Holloway, Kitty (SEC)	<u>CSC Staff</u>
Hotz, Mike (FCA)	Davis, Kym
Hoyas, Robert (GSA)	Dolan, Kay F.
Huber, Al (Commerce)	Howerton, Allan
Lane, Carrie (DLA)	Larrick, Dean
Lovell, Elmer (NLRB)	Phinney, Barbara
Lynt, Betty (Labor)	Poole, James R.
Malakie, Isabel (FCC)	
Moody, Charles (Interior)	
Moore, Mary (Justice)	
Ozier, Marjie (State)	
Pugh, Howard (Army)	
Robinson, Barbara (HUD)	
Rogers, David (AF)	
Rupp, David (GSA)	
Sampson, Lynda (NASA)	
Saunders, Lacy (Army)	